

DESIGN

—FOR—

A FRATERNITY HOME AND CHAPTER HOUSE

—BY—

S. F. FORBES.

—————

THESIS FOR
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

—IN—

ARCHITECTURE.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS,
1898.

The Greek Letter fraternity system is as old as the republic itself. It is the outgrowth of a desire manifested as early as 1776 to promote an interest in literature, and to establish a more friendly intercourse among scholars. The qualifications for membership were scholarship and good fellowship. The story of the development and persecutions of various fraternities is one of interest. The degree of success that they have at present attained is the result of that growth and improvement in strength which should come through the fostering of any honorable enterprise.

It has been said that Greek Letter fraternities are invaluable for the good influence that they exert upon their members, for the unselfish ambitions that they encourage, and for the ennobling and permanent friendships formed through them.

As early as 1857 the Delta Kappa Epsilon society built a log house in the wood near Kenyon College at a cost of fifty dollars. It was plastered or chinked with mud, simply furnished, and provided with a kitchen stove, a skillet, and a few simple dishes. The instinct for a home had conquered.

There are now some eight hundred chapters of various fraternities in the United States. They embrace a membership of over 120 000, and a monied investment of \$3 000 000. Their exponents are men noted for ability and prominence in every sphere

of life. An honorable ambition prevails among the leaders of the best fraternities to make their homes complete and attractive in every particular.

At the present time general improvement in fraternity life is manifested in more directions and upon a larger scale than ever before. We have the same inclination toward culture in some worthy field of intellectual activity. The aim is improvement in literary culture and in manly character. In the organization of the fraternity we must find a substitute for the home. We may provide for social pleasure with profit.

The ideal fraternity home would be one adapted to elaborate social or business gatherings peculiar to the routine of the life of the organization, and would at the same time be arranged to insure that seclusion and quiet desirable for thought and study. The actual fraternity needs, also, embrace chapter rooms, and business offices for the secretary.

In the home life it would be desirable to have libraries, parlors, club rooms, lounging rooms, bed rooms, with baths and toilets. A dining room for the fraternity adapted for banqueting on a considerable scale should be provided. The apartments of the servants must be convenient to the work they must perform.

While the primary object of the apartments should be for the immediate every-day uses of the club life, yet the position and arrangement of rooms with respect to each other should be such that it would lend itself readily to the larger functions

of social life. There should be an elaborate ball room with reception rooms. Smoking rooms, billiard rooms, and card and wine rooms should occupy that prominence suited to the tastes of the particular society. Ample room should be given to a gymnasium with baths and rubbing rooms.

In the solution of an ideal fraternity home it has been the intention to embody in the design the ideals already touched upon. The proposed site of the building is a ten acre field. Conditions of drainage and sanitation are favorable. Provision is to be made for at least thirty men who are to live in the home. The building is four stories high with an attic for the apartments of the servants.

The general outline of the plan is that of a capital letter I placed sidewise, the stem being emphasized at the center to give prominence to front and rear entrances. The treatment of the plan is in general symmetrical about the long axis of the building, and also symmetrical about the short axis in external outline and architectural treatment. The problem has been one of exceptional interest in the design of the exterior. The interiors of the two wings are radically opposed to each other in purpose and arrangement. Still, the symmetrical outline of the building necessitated a very similar treatment for both wings that would satisfy both sets of conditions.

The great majority of fraternity homes are in ordinary dwelling houses of a style identical with that section of the

country in which they are found. There is no distinctive style of architecture that has been selected or conceded to be most suited to this class of structure. A heavy classical style has been used with success in the treatment of chapter halls.

The design attempted is in the Renaissance style of architecture which seemed to adapt itself well to the peculiar conditions stated.

The first story is included in a pedestal course. It is surmounted by the Corinthian order, while across the end four pairs of engaged columns and two corner piers with engaged columns divide the wall space vertically into five divisions. These divisions are filled with long windows arched at the top and extending through two stories. Square windows light the fourth floor above a heavy string course that runs entirely around the building just over the arches. The heavy transom bar at the springing of the arch marks the floor level in the east wing of the building. The wide decorated frieze contains the windows which light the attic. The same spacing of columns and scale of windows is applied to the narrower facades of the two wings, there being three vertical dimensions of the wall surface. A hipped roof covers the wings.

The central portion of the building connecting the two wings is emphasized by a projection which is crowned by a pediment. The pediment is supported by the same order used in the treatment of the wings. Two single engaged columns and two narrow

pieces and engaged columns divide the facade of the projecting portion vertically into three parts. Small windows with angular and curved pediments are used for the second and third stories, and square windows for the fourth story.

The scheme of treatment is altered for the remaining portion of the facade between the pediment and the wings. The Ionic order is used, extending through the first and second stories. Two full pilasters and two angle pilasters divide this portion of the facade vertically into three divisions which are filled in the second and third stories with arched windows of the same size and style as those used in the wings in the corresponding stories. In front of the pilasters are Ionic columns encircling two porticos, each eight feet wide, one on either side.

A flat roof extending from the cornice back to the wall is accessible from the rooms on the fourth floor. A broad flight of steps leads to the main entrance on the second floor.

Through the vestibule we enter a large hall which extends entirely through to the back entrance. On either side of the entrance are waiting rooms. A general lounging room on the left and an equal amount of room on the right are devoted to the uses of the secretary, and are reached from the main hall by open passage ways. At the farther end of this hall is the staircase leading up from the center and turning each way at the landing. A large window at the landing lights the hall. The

passage to the first floor is under this stairway. At the center of the main hall extends a central cross-hall. This hall is repeated on each floor. The west end of this hall opens into the ball room which occupies the entire space through the three stories. The lounging room is adapted, on state occasions, to be used as a reception room. Dressing rooms are provided on the north side of the hall.

From the ball room is entered either portico on the north and south sides of the building. A large gallery supported by brackets extends around the interior of the ball room at the level of the second floor. The interior wall surface is decorated by pilasters in Corinthian order. A spherical dome covers the entire room.

The cross hall extending to the right from the main hall leads to the dining hall which occupies the central portion of the east wing. The dining room contains two large fire places, one on either side.

A cross hall running north and south leads to the library occupying the south end of the east wing, and to the billiard hall which is in the north end of the same wing. Both billiard hall and library connect with open porticos.

The library is divided internally by two partitions, with large arched openings, into three smaller rooms. Books are arranged in shelves along the walls on the north sides of the rooms.

On the north side of the central east and west hall are the

secretary's room, a toilet room and a servant's store room, with stair case extending through the four floors. An elevator, entered near the center of the main hall, runs to all floors.

On the third floor, occupying the central portion of the front part of the building, is a large chapter room. This is devoted entirely to fraternity meetings of important character, and is never used under any other circumstances.

On either side of the chapter room are two suites of three rooms, each divided partially, for card and wine rooms. The gallery in the ball room is entered at the west end of the east and west central hall.

At the east end of the hall over the dining room is the general club room for the ordinary fraternity gatherings of an informal nature. It contains two large fire places, and has ample room for large window seats and divans.

Nine bed rooms with bath rooms attached, and two toilet rooms occupy the remainder of this floor.

On the fourth floor over the chapter rooms is a suite of rooms fitted especially for guests of honor and distinction. The remainder of the floor is devoted to thirteen bed rooms with baths attached. The central part of the east wing over the general club room is devoted to parlors for guests and for the private use of individual members of the fraternity.

The matron's rooms and all the servants' rooms are in the attic story. Both men and women servants are provided with a

general lounging or reading room.

On the basement, or first floor, we find the kitchen in the central portion of the east wing directly under the dining room. Two small serving rooms enclosed partly in glass connect by dumb waiters with the serving rooms on the second floor.

The servants' dining room is directly across the hall on the south side of the central portion.

The furnace and coal rooms occupy the north portion of the east wing of the first floor under the billiard hall. The laundry and the drying and wash rooms are under the library. The entire first floor under the ball room in the west wing is devoted to the gymnasium. It is connected with a large dressing room and bath and rubbing rooms. The gymnasium is entered at the west from the exterior.

The remaining rooms are devoted to a barber shop, a motor room, a store room, a vegetable room, a wine room, and toilet rooms.